

REMARKS

Claims 1-34 are pending in the application.

Claims 1, 17 and 18 have been amended.

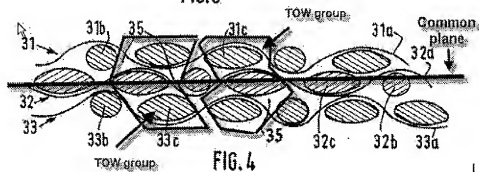
Claims 1 and 17 now recite embodiments wherein axially aligned tows are arranged in tow groups with the axes of the tows in a coplanar relationship. Claim 17 has also been amended to correct a minor typographical error. No new matter has been added. Support for the amendments to Claims 1 and 17 is found in the specification, in particular Figures 1 and 2.

Claim 18 has been amended to provide proper antecedent basis with respect to amended Claim 17.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office has finally rejected claims 1-34 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bompard et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,484,642) in view of the Vane (U.S. Patent No. 5,445,693).

The Office states that, as seen for example in Figure 3, the disclosure of Bompard et al teaches the fabric as claimed including a plurality of substantially parallel, coaxially aligned fiber element groups (33c, 31c), each of said groups having one or more fiber elements wherein a portion of said groups contain two or more fiber elements, and wherein the spacing between fiber elements in a element group is less than the spacing between adjacent element groups. The Office notes that element groups have axes which are in coplanar relationship as shown in Figure 4.



The Office concedes that the fibers of Bompard are set forth as yarns rather than tows. The Office goes on to state that Vane teaches a reinforcing fabric which is formed from tows, yarns or threads.

The Office concludes it would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide the threads of Bompard et al as tows as shown by Vane in order to provide bundles of parallel monofilaments which eliminates the yarn forming step, i.e. spinning.

The Office also concludes that concerning the specific number of tows, i.e. odd or even, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the number of a component and in order to provide the number which brings optimal strength, flexibility, hand, etc.

The Office further concludes that concerning the spacing between the tows, it would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to provide the tows with a specific spacing in order to find the spacing that brings about the optimal fabric strength.

In the Response to Arguments the Office concluded that the tow groups have axes which are in coplanar relationship to the extent claimed as set forth above in the rejection.

Applicants note that independent Claims 1 and 17 have been amended to recite the limitation that axially aligned tows are arranged in tow groups and that it is the axes of the tows that are in a coplanar relationship. Bompard neither teaches nor suggests such coplanar tows arranged in tow groups "wherein the spacing between tows in a tow group is less than the spacing between adjacent tow groups" as recited in independent Claims 1 and 17, nor that there are advantages in doing so.

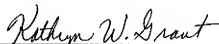
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claims 2-16 and 18-34 are dependent claims and are allowable over the Bompard and Vane references for at least the reasons set forth above.

In light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested. If any fees are due in

connection with the filing of this notice, please charge such necessary fees to
Deposit Account No. 50-0568.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kathryn W. Grant", is written over a horizontal line.

Kathryn W. Grant

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